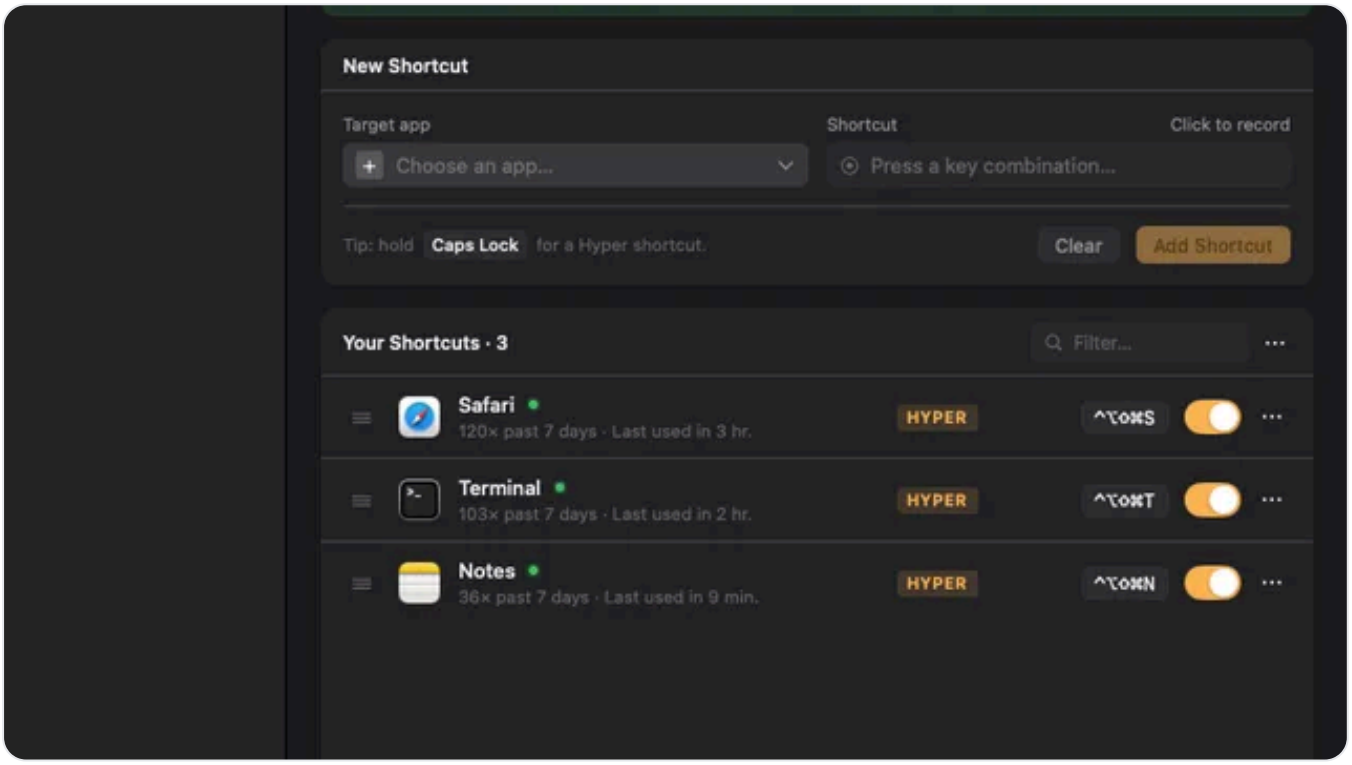
Wink

A macOS Hyper-key window switcher that gives each app its own shortcut.



About

Wink is a macOS window switcher that gives every app its own keystroke. It turns Caps Lock into a Hyper key so you can press once to summon an app and press again to dismiss or cycle it. The app is free, open source, and built for macOS 15+.

What is Wink

Wink is a macOS window switcher built around the idea that each app can have its own keystroke. Instead of opening a launcher, hunting through a list of windows, or relying on thumbnails, Wink lets you jump straight to the app or window you want with a single chord. Its core gesture is simple: Caps Lock becomes a Hyper key, and that layer can be

Wink is designed for people who already know their destination. The app is not trying to replace your whole Mac workflow; it focuses on making app switching faster, more predictable, and less visual clutter-heavy. It is free, open source, and targeted at macOS 15+.

Key features

Wink centers on a few tightly scoped window-switching features that make the app feel fast without needing screen recording permissions.

- **Per-app keystrokes:** Bind letters, F-keys, arrows, or Space to specific apps.
- **Caps Lock Hyper layer:** Press Caps Lock to enter a shortcut layer; press again to leave it.
- **Cycle through windows:** Repeating the same chord can step through windows in that app, including minimized ones.
- **List view picker:** Holding the chord can show a text-and-icon list of windows instead of thumbnails.
- **Search to switch:** If an app does not have a binding, you can type a couple of letters and jump to it through a palette.
- **Local insights:** Wink tracks activations, streaks, time saved, and peak hours in a local SQLite file on your Mac.
- **No Screen Recording:** Window names and icons are used instead of thumbnails, and the app states that it does not require Screen Recording.
- **Rules for special contexts:** It can pause behavior in VMs or remote desktops, and it notices Secure Input situations such as password fields.
- **Automation support:** Scripts can trigger Wink through its `wink://` scheme.
- **Recipe sharing:** Your shortcut setup can be saved as a `.winkrecipe` file for versioning or sharing.

How to use it

Wink is built to be set up once and then used constantly with minimal friction.

- **Install the app on macOS 15 or later.** The site offers a direct DMG download and a

Choose your bindings. Map apps to the Hyper layer under Caps Lock, or use standard modifier combinations if you prefer.

Use a chord to summon an app. Press the bound key once to bring the app forward.

Press again to cycle or dismiss. Repeating the chord can move through that app's windows, including minimized ones.

Hold the chord for a list. If you need help choosing, keep the shortcut held to see a text-based picker.

Use search for everything else. For unbound apps, type two letters in the palette and confirm with Enter.

Review insights locally. Open the app to see activations, streaks, saved time, and suggestions for apps that may deserve a shortcut.

The setup is intentionally flexible: you can use Hyper-only bindings, standard shortcuts, or both at the same time.

Who it is for

Wink is a good fit for macOS users who switch between many apps throughout the day and want a faster alternative to mouse-driven window picking. It is especially useful for people who prefer keyboard-first workflows, developers, writers, designers, and anyone who keeps multiple windows open in the same app.

It also makes sense for users who want a low-overhead window switcher that avoids thumbnail-heavy previews. Because Wink uses accessibility data rather than Screen Recording, it is aimed at people who care about privacy and permission minimization. Teams that want a shared shortcut setup can also benefit from the `.winkrecipe` export format.

What to know before you use it

Wink is focused on app and window switching, not general desktop automation or a full launcher. It does not show window thumbnails, and that is a deliberate tradeoff that keeps the app lightweight and avoids Screen Recording permissions. If you rely on visual previews to identify windows, Wink may feel more minimal than expected.

A few practical limits are worth keeping in mind:

It depends on accessibility-based window data, so behavior can differ from screenshot-based switchers.

Secure Input can temporarily change how shortcuts behave in password fields.

VM and remote desktop sessions may pause per-app rules automatically.

Insights are local to your Mac; they are stored in SQLite and are not uploaded.

Search and cycling help cover unbound apps, but official app menus or native OS controls may still be better for some specialized workflows.

If you want a shortcut-driven Mac window switcher with a strong privacy stance, Wink is a focused option. If you need thumbnail previews, cross-platform support, or a launcher with broader app-management features, you should compare it with other tools before committing. For users who mainly want a macOS Hyper-key window switcher, Wink keeps the experience direct and fast, and the app stays centered on that job.

FAQ

Is Wink really free?

Is Wink free to use?

Does Wink require screen recording permissions?

What platform does Wink support?

What macOS version do I need?

Does Wink require Screen Recording permission?

How does Wink protect my privacy?

Can I use Wink with a non-Hyper key modifier?

What is Wink best for?

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Category	Developer Tools
Platform	macOS, Web, API
Launched	Aug 2026
Updated	18 days ago
Verified	1 months ago

TAGS

keyboard-shortcuts # mac # app-launcher # window switcher # accessibility # privacy # macos # open source # productivity # window-management

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